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UNCLAS HARARE 000146

SIPDIS

FOR INR/R/MR AND AF/PDPA DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS

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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION U.S./AFRICA TRADE; HARARE

1. Under headline "U. S. should treat Africa as single entity" the pro-government weekly "The Sunday Mirror" dedicated its January 19 editorial to cautioning the United States against the promotion of selective trade agreements, warning that such agreements "have the potential to divide Africa." Excerpts:
2. "The United States and five Southern African Customs Union (SACU) members, last Monday agreed to start negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA), which is designed to lower trade barriers, open markets and stimulate economic growth and development. U. S. trade representative, Robert Zoellick, said the FTA between his country and the five SACU countries "will provide new opportunities for the peoples of all our countries, and will particularly provide a boost to regional growth, development and prosperity." SACY, which comprises Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, will no doubt benefit quite significantly from the increased access to U. S. markets. But, as pointed out by the secretary-general of the Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA), Erasmus Mwencha, such negotiations have the potential to divide Africa and reduce its ability to negotiate in future trade deals. . . Indeed, such selective trade agreements do not fall in the way of closer economic integration at the continental level, and serve to put wedges and schisms in between individual African countries and regional blocs, as they strive to win favorable, exclusive concessions from powerful, rich countries."

SULLIVAN